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General Notes.

GEOGRAPHY AND TRAVELS.

The State University of Iowa Biological Expedition to the West Indies and Florida Keys.—A somewhat novel departure along educational lines was successfully carried out during the past spring and summer under the auspices of the State University of Iowa.

A party consisting of three instructors and eighteen students chartered a 116-ton schooner and spent the months of May, June and July in biological work in the vicinity of the Bahamas, Cuba and the Florida Keys. The university furnished a very satisfactory equipment for a biological laboratory which was fitted up on board, a good working library of marine zoology, and also an equipment for dredging down to 250 fathoms, and a collecting outfit for marine work. All other expenses were met by the members of the party, the entire cost, including transportation from Iowa City to Baltimore and return, and board for the entire time, being only \$200 for each person.

The first dredging was done on the Great Bahama Banks, where many interesting things were found. Next the party proceeded to the famous "Pentacrinus grounds" off Havana, where they succeeded in securing a quantity of the much-prized Crinoids at depths varying from 150 to 250 fathoms.

When it is remembered that this was done with a *sailing* vessel and *without steam* for hoisting, the members of the party will be pardoned for feeling somewhat elated over their success.

This was the first occasion on which iron rope has been used for dredging at such a depth with a sailing vessel. Many persons considered it impracticable, but Professor Alexander Agassiz thought it could be done. We found that the rope worked admirably and not a single fathom was lost during the three months of the cruise. Of course, no little credit is due the students, who worked manfully at the cranks of the hoisting machine day after day in the tropical heat.

The expedition was accorded many favors by the Cuban Government, and enjoyed the time spent at Havana and Bahia Honda, a port some forty miles to the westward. The local authorities at this latter place, however, seemed to regard the party as a filibustering expedition, in spite of the ladies on board. The shoal water collecting was

excellent in this region, and a quantity of material was secured, although no one was allowed to go more than thirty yards inland from the water's edge.

From Bahia Honda the Iowans went to Key West, where they were not allowed to land on account of a yellow fever scare, but were ordered to quarantine at the Dry Tortugas, which was anything but a hardship, for a better ground for marine biological work would be hard to find. The quarantine officer, Dr. Robert Murry, was untiring in his courtesies, letting the members of the expedition have the full run of old Fort Jefferson, and, better yet, of the moat around it, which is, in effect, a grand aquarium such as delights the zoological heart.

On two occasions the whole party had the rare privilege of studying fully expanded Millipores, while living corals of many species were always at hand.

Two weeks were spent in dredging on the famous "Pourtales Plateau," between Sand and Sombrero Keys, at depths varying from seventy-five to two hundred and fifty fathoms. A great quantity of material was thus secured, including some characteristic deep-sea forms, such as *Asthenosoma*, calcareous sponges and old-fashioned corals.

Returning again to the Bahamas, the littoral and terrestrial faunas near Spanish Wells, Eleuthera, were very carefully explored, and a rich harvest secured. The shoal connecting Eleuthera with Little San Salvador was dredged, the most notable results being some particularly beautiful hydroids.

Thence a homeward passage of eight days concluded a cruise which will be remembered with delight by every member of the party, and which was as remarkable for the absence of any mishaps as for the educational and scientific results which will certainly accrue.

In addition to the specimens secured and notes taken by the party, a splendid series of photographs, taken principally by Instructor G. L. Howser, constitute the best of records of the cruise.

—C. C. NUTTING.